

David N. Weil. *Economic Growth*. (Second Edition). New York: Addison Wesley Press, 2009. 565 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

Despite the great concern towards the issue of the convergence of economies, the world is still witnessing the gap between rich and poor being widened progressively. The book examines the interesting question of why some countries are rich and some are poor-why they differ in their levels of income and their rates of economic growth. Featuring the latest data, new case studies, and a number of significant additions in the content, the new Second Edition takes the Weil legacy further. The text develops a very balanced relevance of both macroeconomics' classical roots and its current practice in the field of growth. Engagingly written, it brings into use simple models, close to reality examples, and instructive tables and figures to address the key issues. Chapter summaries, list of key concepts at the beginning of each chapter, questions for review, as well as problems and applications to help the diligent reader master the material he provides. The clarity of the writing, the richness of the empirical and quantitative descriptions, and the best available evidence of some of the modern economies confronting growth issues, however, would further deepen his interest.

Even with my long time aversion towards mathematical rich explanations, I personally have found this book highly interesting and well worth reading, mainly because the profound knowledge has been imparted in a way that even the most complex issues are explained in a simply, though mathematically as well. Together with a distinctive theoretical focus on problem solving, the book brilliantly matches accessibility with cutting-edge theory. There are discussions of functions within each chapter, but much of the math is put into footnotes, separately in mathematical extension boxes, and in chapter appendices. Each chapter ends up in a conclusion that gives the chapter a sharp point. And the order in which author takes forward a concept from its base to its application in today's world scenario, and even in the future, keeps the reader's attention intact.

The text book is structured in five parts, each containing a set of series of chapters. The first part overviews some historical facts over the growth trends, as old as 1820, and logic of the divergence in income growth rates between countries. The second part includes some hardcore macroeconomic concepts about population and economic growth theories. The author has introduced some innovative concepts in this context. For instance, how much of the variation in income across countries does education explain, is one I enjoyed reading most. He holds the lately discovered element of technological progress in the production function, accountable as one of the vital factors for enhancing the efficiency of the economy in the subsequent part (three). The improved mathematical version of the technology production function and its incorporation in the famous Solow Model is remarkable, yet simplistic. The succeeding chapter defines a proper role of the central government in containing economic problems, thus negating the primitive notion of making its role as small and as unobtrusive as possible for economic affair's management. He unfolds the long ago mystery of as to whether its the poverty (both of income and mind) which makes a government bad, or mirror image is the case, by showing their two way causal relationship, through facts and figures. Here the author steadily progresses a step farther without segmenting the reader's concentration, towards recounting a few of the very basic concepts of income inequality, coupled with

substantive empirical evidences. He identifies it as one of the factors deterring growth. Moreover, he studies the general masses' behaviour of savings, inclination toward child education, under the influence of domestic culture. Since culture is a qualitative term, its impact on macroeconomic variables can't be quantified. However, David Weil tentatively concludes in the presence of significant data that culture to some extent does help in explaining differences in per capita income between countries, thus indirectly shaping up the growth trends. Geography, climate, and natural resources are believed to be few other important factors, stimulating the growth process of any economy, through trade, agricultural productivity, and improved living standards. Environmental sustainability is emphasised greatly. The author asserts the need of conservation of the natural resources, as their depletion has already contributed a great deal in retarding growth. He has provided ample evidence to confirm perpetuating growth, if the process of substitution of resource-saving-technologies comes into play.

The essence of growth is and ought to be to make people in general content and happier. This notion, though has not been supported much evidently, however, still remains true for the majority. And this is precisely what the author ascertains in the last chapter, together with answering certain dilemmas, which have always been something of an enigma to an economics student. These are the key, carving-the-destiny issues which economies will be facing in the near future. I appreciate the way the author argues and counter argues on the independent practicability of three macroeconomic variables, namely, factor accumulation, technology, and efficiency, which are considered inevitable for growth. Rather, he is suggestive of mix of their usage. However, these alone are not indicative of the poverty or richness of economy. Government behaviour is one particular strong influential determinant. The author establishes the fact that governments of poor economies are damaging for growth, in that they are more corrupt and more wasteful in their expenditures. The book eventually finishes on a positive note that 'growth will certainly cause reduction in the income disparities, and converge economies at the steady state of growth, sooner or later.

In a word, I would not feel reluctant to acknowledge the competence and ingenuity of the author, who has masterfully integrated the current growth concerns in a single volume. Being a macroeconomics lover, I simply adored this book and can't help myself figuring out a single reason for not buying and making it an addition in my home library.

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